

VIII. THE MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY RATE (MER)

Overview

The Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officers (WSALPHO) sponsored the development of a Medicaid Administrative Match Steering Committee composed of representatives of a cross section of Local Health Jurisdictions to address issues related to the implementation of the new Administrative Match contract. The Steering Committee created a methodology for calculating the Medicaid Eligibility Rate (MER), which has received federal approval.

The MER methodology recognizes differences in size and organization of the 35 different Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs) in Washington State. Some jurisdictions are as small as Wahkiakum County, which has a population of 3,900, one clinic and four public health staff. The largest is Seattle King County Public Health Department, with nearly two million county residents, eleven large public health clinics and a staff of over 2,000. The disparities in county and LHJ size are a variable that has been taken into account by the design of the Washington State Medicaid Eligibility Rate (MER) methodology for local health jurisdictions.

Calculating the MER

Validation by MAA

At the close of every quarter, each LHJ claiming unit will submit files in a common format to WSALPHO where they will be merged into one file. The files will consist of an unduplicated case count of all clients seen during the previous quarter by LHJ claiming units that perform Medicaid Administrative Claiming activities. Each LHJ claiming unit will keep supporting documentation in its audit files explaining how its file was created.

The file layout will include the Personal Identification Code (PIC) code, when available, for each client served, as well as other identifying information. At a minimum, core data fields will include full first name, middle initial or middle name, full last name, and birth date. This data will be compiled and submitted to the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) in a format recommended by them.

WSALPHO will act in the same capacity as OSPI does on behalf of local school districts. Like OSPI, WSALPHO will be the central point for gathering the local data and will be responsible for ensuring an unduplicated client count and ensuring proper layout of data for the file. After receiving the file, MAA will verify the data against their eligibility information for same time period. MAA will generate a report for WSALPHO that identifies clients who were enrolled in Medicaid programs during the quarter. Prior to the actual enrollment verification, representatives from WSALPHO and MAA will meet to develop the criteria for achieving the verification and methodologies to address discrepancies.

The MER will include all Medicaid programs where there is federal participation.

Once WSALPHO receives the verification data from MAA, WSALPHO will disaggregate the file in order to establish a unique MER for each LHJ claiming unit. To calculate the MER percentage for each claiming unit, the number of positive matches with the eligibility file will constitute the numerator and the total unduplicated number of clients served by the LHJ claiming unit for the previous quarter and reported in the MER file will constitute the denominator.

The MER is linked to the administrative unit called a “claiming unit”, whose staff participates in the RMTS, and whose expenses and revenues and unique approved indirect rate will be reported on the invoice. This unit is clearly defined in a table of organization, and serves and collects data on a distinct group of clients. The close link of the MER to the administrative unit that serves the clients in the MER strengthens the consistency and inter-relatedness of the data supporting the MAM invoice.

Quarterly Calculation of the MER

The MER will be calculated quarterly, and LHJ claiming units will all apply the prior quarter’s eligibility data to the current quarter claim. This will ensure that there is adequate time for both the LHJs and DSHS/MAA to collect data and aggregate the eligibility verification data, and to provide the respective claiming units with their specific data once the verification is complete. For example, the claim for the April-June quarter of 2005 will use MER data from the January-March 2005 quarter. The July-September quarter claim will use data from the April-June quarter, and so on. All LHJ claiming units will use the prior quarter MER as the basis for the current quarter claim to ensure consistency and uniformity across the state.